

Stenographic Report  
HEARINGS **ORIGINAL**

Before The  
Subcommittee on the Assassination of  
John F. Kennedy  
of the

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

TESTIMONY OF ANNA TARASOFF

Washington, D.C.

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TESTIMONY OF ANNA TARASOFF

Wednesday, April 12, 1978

House of Representatives,

Subcommittee on the Assassination of John F. Kennedy of the Select Committee on Assassinations.

Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 5:00 p.m., pursuant to notice, in Room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, the Honorable Richardson Preyer (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

PRESENT: Representatives Preyer and Sawyer.

ALSO PRESENT: Wolf, Hornbeck, Purdy, Flanagan, Wills, Genzman, Fonzi, ~~Hessaway~~, Cross, and Svendsen.

Mr. Preyer. The committee will resume its hearing.

Mrs. Tarasoff, we appreciate your coming here. We will ask if you will stand and be sworn.

Do you solemnly swear the evidence you will give the subcommittee will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes; I do.

— TESTIMONY OF ANNA TARASOFF

Mr. Genzman. Will you give your full name and address for the record?

Mrs. Tarasoff. My name is Anna Tarasoff and I live in Rancho Contento, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

Mr. Genzman. At this time I would like to show you a document which is labeled JFK Exhibit No. 94. Mrs. Tarasoff, have you previously been shown a copy of this letter which is labeled JFK Exhibit No. 94?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. ~~Is~~ your understanding that the letter is a letter from the CIA which authorizes any individual who has executed a secrecy agreement with the agency or ~~is~~ bound by obligations of secrecy to furnish this committee information within its scope and jurisdiction?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. Mrs. Tarasoff, did you ever aid your husband in his job in Mexico City in 1963?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Not in 1973, no. Let me make a correction. In 1973 is when we arrived. As I have said previously, I was picked up on contract in 1974.

Mr. Genzman. Did you ever aid your husband in his work in Mexico City before you were actually employed in Mexico City?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes; I did.

Mr. Genzman. Can you explain to us what you did in aiding your husband in his job?

Mrs. Tarasoff. My main purpose in aiding my husband was to take on the duties of translating the English transcript for the simple reason that he has a little problem in hearing and if there is a slight dialect, even in the English language

it would be hard for him to pick it up. So, I was doing the English transcript.

His main duty was to take on the responsibility of transcribing the Russian transcripts. Although I did the English, he also reviewed it to be doubly sure that whatever I had transcribed was on the tape itself. This would be a good time to pick up whatever was on the tape also.

Mr. Genzman. Do you know the source of the tape recordings which you aided your husband in transcribing?

Mrs. Tarasoff. It would be in the English transcript. That would appear on any reel that would be sent to him for transcribing.

Mr. Genzman. Were you aware of whether these tapes recorded conversations?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Was I aware of the recording of the -

Mr. Genzman. Were you aware of the location of the recording of conversations?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. Specifically, did these occur at the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. Mrs. Tarasoff, at this time I would like you to review four documents. At this time I would also like to announce to the Congressman that these four documents are included in the packet of documents which were given to them

before the hearing and the documents we will be discussing appear on pages 1, 2, 10 and 11.

Mrs. Tarasoff, can you identify any of these documents?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Identify? Meaning what?

Mr. Genzman. Do you recognize any of these documents?

Mrs. Tarasoff. I recognize it as being my husband's work because I knew his style of work.

Mr. Genzman. Were you shown these documents prior to your appearance here today?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. I refer you to the document labeled "P-2" and this notation that appears at the bottom right-hand corner of the page. Do you have that document in front of you?

Mrs. Tarasoff. It was marked what?

Mr. Genzman. P-2 in the very extreme right-hand lower corner.

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. Do you recognize this document?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Recognize it as my husband's work, yes.

Mr. Genzman. What features on this document would lead you to believe that it was your husband's work?

Mrs. Tarasoff. I know it. He would always put the slashes indicating there would be something that he wasn't too sure of. Well, basically his style of writing, or typing rather.

Mr. Genzman. Are you saying then that this is a

transcription of a tape recording which you believe your  
husband to have done?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. Do you have any independent recollection of  
this conversation aside from what appears on this document  
labeled P-2?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No.

Mr. Genzman. I would next like to refer you to the docu-  
ment labeled P-10 in the extreme lower right-hand corner. Do  
you recognize this document?

Mrs. Tarasoff. This would be recognizable. It does not  
indicate much of anything but I would say it would be part  
of his work.

Mr. Genzman. Would you say it would be more consistent  
with his work rather than inconsistent?

Mrs. Tarasoff. It is consistent with his work, yes.

Mr. Genzman. Do you have any independent recollection of  
this conversation other than what appears on the document  
labeled P-10?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No.

Mr. Genzman. I would next like to refer you to a document  
labeled P-1. Do you recognize this document?

Mrs. Tarasoff. As his work, yes.

Mr. Genzman. Are you saying then that this is a tran-  
scription of a conversation which your husband did in Mexico

city?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. Do you have any independent recollection of this conversation other than what appears on the document labeled P-1?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No; I don't.

Mr. Genzman. Do you have any recollection, other than what you have seen on these three documents, of any conversations pertaining to Lee Harvey Oswald which either you or your husband may have been connected with?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No. On these documents, no.

Mr. Genzman. Aside from what appears on these three documents, do you have any independent recollection of conversations dealing with Lee Harvey Oswald which were part of the surveillance operation in Mexico City?

Mrs. Tarasoff. According to my recollection, I, myself, have made a transcript, an English transcript, of Lee Oswald talking to the Russian Consulate or whoever he was at that time, asking for financial aid.

Now, that particular transcript does not appear here and whatever happened to it, I do not know, but it was a lengthy transcript and I personally did that transcript. It was a lengthy conversation between him and someone at the Russian Embassy.

Mr. Genzman. How long do you recall this conversation was

1 Mrs. Tarasoff. This conversation, I would say, at least  
2 covered a page and a half or two.

3 Mr. Genzman. Is it your recollection that the person  
4 speaking identified himself as Lee Oswald?

5 Mrs. Tarasoff. He definitely identified himself as being  
6 Lee Oswald.

7 Mr. Genzman. Referring to the document labeled P-1,  
8 is it possible that this is the conversation that you are  
9 recalling?

10 Mrs. Tarasoff. No. This would not be the conversation  
11 that I would be recalling for the simple reason that this is  
12 my husband's work and at that time probably the name didn't  
13 mean much of anything. But this particular piece of work that  
14 I am talking about is something that came in and it was marked  
15 as urgent.

16 Mr. Genzman. Do you recall whether Lee Oswald or the per-  
17 son ~~who~~ you later determined to be Lee Oswald spoke in English  
18 or Russian?

19 Mrs. Tarasoff. English only.

20 Mr. Genzman. In summary, then, you are saying that the  
21 document P-1 does not appear to be the transcription of the  
22 conversation you are thinking of?

23 Mrs. Tarasoff. That is right.

24 Mr. Genzman. Because it speaks of broken Russian as  
25 opposed to the English language?

1 Mrs. Tarasoff. That is right.

2 Mr. Genzman. Because it is shorter than the conversation  
3 you remember?

4 Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

5 Mr. Genzman. Because it is in your husband's style rather  
6 than your style?

7 Mrs. Tarasoff. That is right.

8 Mr. Genzman. And because there is no mention of Oswald's  
9 finances?

10 Mrs. Tarasoff. That is correct.

11 Mr. Genzman. Mrs. Tarasoff, earlier you spoke of an  
12 urgent request for a transcription of a conversation. Could  
13 you tell us the circumstances surrounding this urgent request?

14 Mrs. Tarasoff. This urgent request either came from the  
15 party that was doing the monitoring of the transcripts and  
16 it came through and when these reels are delivered to us, if  
17 there is any request it is also included with a -- well, on a  
18 regular copy of the whole transcript, it would be included with  
19 the reels, "In number so and so there is a conversation. Will  
20 you please handle this prior to anything other than what is on  
21 the sheet originally?"

22 Mr. Genzman. Do you recall the names of the contact who  
23 made the urgent request?

24 Mrs. Tarasoff. This was written on a piece of paper and  
25 it was enclosed in with the reels. So, I would hardly know who

the particular party was who requested this.

1 // Mr. Genzman. What did you do after you received this  
2 request?

3 Mrs. Tarasoff. We went ahead and transcribed whatever  
4 was on that particular reel in the space allotted or space  
5 designated. After it was transcribed, we contacted whoever  
6 it was then. They, in turn, came by and picked it up. Once  
7 it left our hands, we have no knowledge of what happened to it.

8 Mr. Genzman. Was your contact the normal contact that  
9 you used or was it a special contact?

10 Mrs. Tarasoff. It was our normal contact at that time.

11 Mr. Genzman. Were the circumstances unusual in any other  
12 way?

13 Mrs. Tarasoff. Such as what?

14 Mr. Genzman. You have mentioned that an urgent request  
15 was given to you in conjunction with this tape recording. Were  
16 any of the circumstances unusual besides the fact that you got  
17 an urgent request to do this particular piece of work?

18 Mrs. Tarasoff. No. It was just a request that this was  
19 urgent and there were no other explanations as to why it was  
20 urgent.

21 Mr. Genzman. Was the fact that you turned the transcript  
22 over to your contact immediately unusual?

23 Mrs. Tarasoff. No, because we had done this prior to  
24 that. If there was anything that we felt was urgent we would

ways contact them. Then it would be up to the people at the embassy to decide whether it was or wasn't.

Mr. Genzman. Do you remember any other details of the conversation which you say involved Lee Harvey Oswald?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Well, for one thing he was persistent in asking for financial aid in order to leave the country. They were not about to give him any financial aid whatsoever. He had also mentioned that he tried the Cuban Embassy and they had also refused financial aid.

Mr. Genzman. I believe you stated earlier that the person speaking identified himself as Lee Oswald in the conversation?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes; he definitely did identify himself as Lee Oswald.

Mr. Genzman. On the basis of this identification were you able to infer that the person who spoke on September 28 was also Lee Oswald?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Not listening to this particular tape or the other one, I would not know whether it was the same party or not.

Mr. Genzman. In any of your connections with the Lee Harvey Oswald case, and I am speaking specifically of your duties in the surveillance and operation in Mexico City, was there anything out of the ordinary aside from that urgent request that you received?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No; there wasn't anything out of the

ordinary except they just asked that this was one thing that  
they wanted transcribed as soon as possible and turned over to  
them.

Mr. Genzman. Were you at any time asked to do a comparison of voices; in other words, comparing two different types to make an identification concerning Lee Harvey Oswald?

7 Mrs. Tarasoff. No. It would be a rare occasion for  
8 them to return a tape to us once it left our hands. There  
9 was never a comparison made for voices.

Mr. Genzman. Prior to the assassination of President Kennedy, were you ever contacted by anyone in Mexico City to explain your connection with the Lee Harvey Oswald surveillance

3 Mrs. Tarasoff. No.

Mr. Genzman. After the assassination of President Kennedy,  
were you ever contacted to explain your connection with  
the Lee Harvey Oswald surveillance?

17 Mrs. Tarasoff. No.

Mr. Genzman. Did the CIA or the FBI or the Warner Commission or any other government body ever contact you?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No; no one ever approached us in regard to this particular circumstance

Mr. Genzman. Other than staff members of this committee,  
has anyone ever approached you and asked you to explain your  
knowledge concerning Lee Harvey Oswald and the surveillance  
operations in Mexico City?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No, sir.

Mr. Genzman. Do you have any recollection of who your contacts were as part of the surveillance operations?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Well, we had so many different <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>- you mean contacts at the period of all this?

Mr. Genzman. Yes.

Mrs. Tarasoff. The first contact was [ ]. Our second contact, I don't remember his last name but I do remember his first, which is Rudy.

Mr. Genzman. Could you describe this individual whom you believe was named Rudy?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes. He was fair complexioned and receding hairline. He more or less always wore a beige sort of colored suit; an average build, he was neither light nor heavy. He was actually of Polish extraction. So you would say he had no outstanding features, really.

Mr. Genzman. Do you recall his hair color?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes; he was a blond, what was left of it.

Mr. Genzman. Do you recall his height? Could you estimate his height?

Mrs. Tarasoff. I would say he would be just a little taller than what my husband is.

Mr. Genzman. How tall is your husband?

Mrs. Tarasoff. I think he is about five seven or so, or six, about that.

1 Mr. Genzman. Do you recall the age of the individual  
2 whom you believe was named Rudy?

3 Mrs. Tarasoff. I would say Rudy at that time would have  
4 been in his 40's.

5 Mr. Genzman. Mr. Chairman, I have no further questions.

6 Mr. Preyer. Thank you. Mr. Sawyer.

7 Mr. Sawyer. I have one or two questions.

8 Do you recall any other subject that was covered in that  
9 conversation that you transcribed other than the requests for  
10 financial aid?

11 Mrs. Tarasoff. That was his main purpose, sir, just  
12 getting financial aid, because he had said that he was broke  
13 and he wanted to leave the country and he was seeking financial  
14 aid and he thought that contacting the Russian Embassy or  
15 Cuban Embassy, I think, would be willing to finance his passage  
16 to wherever he wanted to go. There was nothing ~~in~~ the conver-  
17 sation was a repetition of questions and answers really, and  
18 the party who spoke to him spoke in English, so there was  
19 no difficulty in understanding either one of them as to what  
20 they were saying to each other.

21 Mr. Sawyer. As you recall it, the net effect was they  
22 turned him down?

23 Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes; they definitely turned him down. In  
24 fact, if I recall, they finally got disgusted and hung up on  
25 him.

~~sawyer.~~ Thank you.

Mrs. Tarasoff. You are welcome.

Mr. Preyer. I have no questions. Do you have any further questions?

Mr. Genzman. No; I do not, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Preyer. Thank you, Mrs. Tarasoff. We appreciate very much your being here. We will excuse you at this time.

Before we recess we have a provision that on the conclusion of the testimony of a witness, if the witness wishes to make any statement about his or her testimony or wishes to make any clarifying remarks he or she would be recognized. If there is anything further you would like to add or comments you wish to make we will be glad to hear from you.

Mrs. Tarasoff. The only thing I have to say is that after so many years, to try to rely on memory alone makes it rather difficult in not having other than these few documents to refresh your memory, it makes it a little difficult, really.

Other than that, I would say whatever I have said today here would be true to the best of my knowledge after so many years.

Mr. Preyer. Thank you. We appreciate your testimony.

Mrs. Tarasoff. I thank you.

Mr. Preyer. The committee stands adjourned until 8:00 tomorrow morning in this same room.

*(Thereupon the committee adjourned.)*